

Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 24/1 (2013):25-41.
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Sanctuary: Cosmos, Covenant, and Creation

Elias Brasil de Souza
Biblical Research Institute
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Christians have traditionally understood the earthly sanctuary¹ with its priests, sacrifices, and sacred times as a pictorial representation of the plan of salvation with its attending implications for the relationship between God and humans. Seventh-day Adventists have added to the soteriological understanding of the sanctuary and its services a specific and crucial theological contribution by setting the worship system of Israel within an eschatological framework with attention to a vertical typology. That is, the earthly tabernacle came to be seen as a type of the heavenly temple where Jesus Christ performs his heavenly ministry in order to bring the plan of salvation to its consummation. On the basis of a close examination of the Scriptures and rigorous exegetical and theological studies, it was found that the biblical way of perceiving the Israelite worship system was preordained by God to reveal in figurative ways the plan of salvation with a focus on the final resolution of the great controversy between good and evil.²

In recent years a distinct way of perceiving the sanctuary has gained considerable ground among scholars as several studies have proposed what we may call a “cosmological framework” for understanding the

¹This article uses the term “sanctuary” in most cases in the sense of “sanctuary/tabernacle/temple” in order to express the main locus of the Israelite worship system. Where appropriate, tabernacle and temple are also used.

² See Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical τῶπος Structures*, Andrews University Seminary: Doctoral Dissertation Series 2 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981); idem, “Cosmic Metanarrative for the Coming Millennium,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 11 (2000), 102-119.

Israelite sanctuary. This implies that the earthly sanctuary is not primarily a type of a heavenly counterpart but a reflection of the cosmos or creation.³ When the heavenly sanctuary appears in the picture at all, it means the heavens, the cosmos or creation as a whole. Among critical scholars, Jon D. Levenson, drawing heavily on extra-biblical parallels, has related the sanctuary with cosmogonic myths of the Ancient Near East and asserted that the rituals “that took place there . . . were thought to allow human participation in the divine ordering of the world.”⁴ Within the evangelical circle, a major proponent of a similar view is G. K. Beale, according to whom the temple is to be understood as a mirror of the cosmos. He argues that the Israelite “temple was composed of three main parts, each of which symbolized a major part of the cosmos: 1) The outer court represented the habitable world where humanity dwelt; 2) the holy place was emblematic of the visible heavens and its light source; 3) the holy of holies symbolized the invisible direction of the cosmos where God and his heavenly hosts dwelt.”⁵ In a recent work, John Walton has argued that the cosmic role of the temple as perceived in the ancient Near East also applies to the temple in Israel.⁶

Given the current scholarly contention that the sanctuary mirrors the cosmos/creation and considering the impact that such a view might have upon the Adventist understanding of the sanctuary, this study will

³ See, e.g., Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 97; G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 32-33; J. Gerald Janzen, *Exodus*, Westminster Bible Companion (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 269; Jeff Morrow, “Creation as Temple-Building and Work as Liturgy in Genesis 1-3,” *The Journal of the Orthodox Center for the Advancement of Biblical Studies* 2, no. 1 (2009): available at: <http://www.ocabs.org/journal/index.php/jocabs/article/viewFile/43/18>; William P. Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), see especially chapter 3, “The Cosmic Temple: Cosmogony According to Genesis 1:1-2:3” (pp. 33-77); John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 123-127; idem, *The Lost World of Genesis 1: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press), 78-92; idem, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 106-119.

⁴ Levenson, 97.

⁵ Beale, 32-33.

⁶ Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology*, 187-192.

examine this topic and address some important issues. First, we have to ascertain whether the cosmological view of the sanctuary temple has exegetical support from the biblical text. Second, we need to investigate what framework, if any, the Bible provides for understanding the earthly sanctuary. Third, we shall consider the implications of creation language and imagery for the theology of the sanctuary. And finally, we shall conclude these considerations with a brief reflection on a vertical typology of the sanctuary.

Sanctuary and Cosmos

Although the biblical text reveals some links between creation/cosmos and the sanctuary, it needs to be pointed out that, as J. Palmer well observed, “this connection is very clearly seen in the literature of the Second Temple period.”⁷ In the Old Testament itself this connection is admittedly “less explicit.”⁸ He also observes that the connection of tabernacle with creation “is plausible on the grounds of ancient Near Eastern parallels and from the muted, though still present, witness of the Old Testament, especially when read in the light of early Jewish interpretation.”⁹ So as Palmer recognizes, although the tabernacle is portrayed in the Scriptures with creation language and cosmic overtones, the cosmological framework for understanding the sanctuary is at best secondary to the basic concerns and purposes of the biblical writers.

So, it seems clear that for such an approach to be construed one has to turn to “ancient Near Eastern parallels” and “early Jewish interpretation.” An examination of ancient Near Eastern texts and especially extra-biblical literature of the Second Temple period reveals the ample profusion of cosmological views connected with the sanctuary. Mesopotamian, Ugaritic, and Egyptian texts also seem to hold such a cosmic view of the temple concept. The temple building process of King Gudea of Lagash seems to evoke a cosmic perception of the temple

⁷ James Palmer, “Exodus and the Biblical Theology of the Tabernacle,” in *Heaven on Earth*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Simon J. Gathercole (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2004), 14.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid, 15.

idea.¹⁰ Also the Baal cycle of Ugarit, portrays Baal's involvement in the construction of a cosmic temple¹¹ and refers to El's cosmic abode at the source of two rivers.¹² Such ideas were also very much at home in Egypt, where such cosmological ideas related to the temple appear to have developed more clearly. As William A. Ward aptly summarized: "The cult temple as a building symbolized the divine creation of the universe. It represented the eternal existence of an ordered universe as opposed to the chaotic forces which, according to myth, once attempted to destroy that order. This struggle between order and chaos—that is, good and evil—was part of all ancient thought, including that of Egypt."¹³

However, it is in the literature of Second Temple period that the cosmological interpretations of the temple become more explicit. In an instructive work, P. Hayward compiled a vast array of late Jewish texts dealing with the temple. A cursory examination of this literature suffices to reveal that the cosmic interpretation of the temple and its appurtenances became pervasive towards the end of the Second Temple period.¹⁴ In Ben Sira there appears the notion that the Temple Service "has a part to play in the stability of Creation, the priest himself representing the assurance that God will never again destroy the world by a flood."¹⁵ Similar ideas are endorsed by *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, *Jubilees*, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus. However, it is in Philo and Josephus that the different parts of the temple are depicted as representations of the world or universe.

The following excerpt from Philo portrays the universe as a temple, the material counterpart of which is the temple of Jerusalem:

¹⁰ See Richard E. Averbeck, "The Cylinders of Gudea" in *The Context of Scripture*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 1:417-433.

¹¹ Richard J. Clifford, "The Temple in the Ugaritic Myth of Baal," in *Symposia*, ed. F. M. Cross (American Schools of Oriental Research, 1975), 137-145.

¹² Smith, Mark S. and Simon B. Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*. Writings from the Ancient World 9 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 119-141.

¹³ William A. Ward, "Temples and Sanctuaries: Egypt" in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:369.

¹⁴ Robert Hayward, *The Jewish Temple: A Non-Biblical Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1996).

¹⁵ Hayward, 52; see *Ben Sirach* 45.

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We ought to look upon the universal world as the highest and truest temple of God, having for its most holy place that most sacred part of the essence of all existing things, namely, the heaven; and for ornaments, the stars; and for priests, the subordinate ministers of his power, namely, the angels, incorporeal souls, not beings compounded of irrational and rational natures, such as our bodies are, but such as have the irrational parts wholly cut out, being absolutely and wholly intellectual, pure reasonings, resembling the unit.

But the other temple is made with hands; for it was desirable not to cut short the impulses of men who were eager to bring in contributions for the objects of piety, and desirous either to show their gratitude by sacrifices for such good fortune as had befallen them, or else to implore pardon and forgiveness for whatever errors they might have committed. He moreover foresaw that there could not be any great number of temples built either in many different places, or in the same place, thinking it fitting that as God is one, his temple also should be one.¹⁶

Besides, for Philo the world and the soul also function as temples in mutual relationship:

For there are, as it seems, two temples belonging to God; one being this world, in which the high priest is the divine word, his own firstborn son. The other is the rational soul, the priest of which is the real true man, the copy of whom, perceptible to the senses, is he who performs his paternal vows and sacrifices, to whom it is enjoined to put on the aforesaid tunic, the representation of the universal heaven, in order that the world may join with the man in offering sacrifice, and that the man may likewise co-operate with the universe.¹⁷

Similar ideas are developed by Josephus for whom the temple is a counterpart of the world:

For if anyone do but consider the fabric of the tabernacle, and take a view of the garments of the high priest, and of those vessels which we make use of in our sacred ministration, he will find that our legislator was a divine man, and that we are unjustly reproached by others: for if

¹⁶ "The Special Laws, I. 66-67" in *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, translated by Charles Duke Yonge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 540.

¹⁷ "On Dreams," Book 1, 215 in *The Works of Philo*, 384.

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anyone do without prejudice, and with judgment, look upon these things, he will find they were every one made in way of imitation and representation of the universe. When Moses distinguished the tabernacle into three parts, and allowed two of them to the priests, as a place accessible and common, he denoted the land and the sea, these being of general access to all; but he set apart the third division for God, because heaven is inaccessible to men. And when he ordered twelve loaves to be set on the table, he denoted the year, as distinguished into so many months. By branching out the candlestick into seventy parts, he secretly intimated the Decani, or seventy divisions of the planets; and as to the seven lamps upon the candlesticks, they referred to the course of the planets, of which that is the number.¹⁸

At this juncture one may inquire about the sources and/or motivations that prompted Philo, Josephus, and the other aforementioned Jewish writings to devise these cosmological interpretations of the temple. Although such a question lies beyond the scope of this study, it may be suggested—as Hayward explicitly noted in regard to Wisdom and Philo—that the “possibility that Greek thought may have influenced” these writers “can hardly be excluded.”¹⁹ In addition, it may be hypothesized that temple ideas at home in Egypt might also have exerted influence upon extra-canonical Jewish writings, not to mention the influence of the larger ancient Near Eastern environment mediated by the growing hellenistic pressure. Thus, unsurprisingly, John Walton resorts to Josephus, Philo, and rabbinic literature to endorse the perception of the cosmos as temple.²⁰

So, from the above considerations it may be suggested that cosmological perceptions of the sanctuary or temple are not primarily based on the biblical text but, rather, are dependent on extra-canonical writers who most probably borrowed such ideas from their cultural and literary environment.

¹⁸ *Antiquities* III, 180-182, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, translated by and William Whiston (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987).

¹⁹ Hayward, 112.

²⁰ Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology*, 188.

Sanctuary and Covenant

In the biblical narrative, the tabernacle is clearly linked to covenant and its attending implications (Exod 29:44-46) since the sanctuary came to be constructed only after the people had been granted freedom from slavery and experienced God's revelation at Sinai. Connections between covenant and the tabernacle appear at conceptual and literary levels of the tabernacle account. As A. Rodriguez noted "It is significant that only after the description of the Exodus from Egypt and the covenant at Sinai does the command come from Yahweh to 'let them make me a sanctuary' (Exod 25:8). God had manifested himself in the Exodus, he had appeared on Mt. Sinai (Exod 19), and now his instruction is that a sanctuary be built so that he might dwell among his people."²¹ In addition, the covenantal experience of Sinai should become permanent in the tabernacle. So the glory of Yahweh that appears on Mount Sinai found its permanent dwelling in the tabernacle as described in Exodus 40:34. As noted by Brevard Childs, the "role of the tabernacle as portrayed in [Exodus] ch. 40 was to extend the Sinai experience by means of a permanent, cultic institution."²² The structural parallels between Sinai and tabernacle with three concentric zones of increasing holiness also makes clear that the biblical text intends the sanctuary to be understood within a covenantal or redemptive framework.

In the literary block containing instructions for the construction of the tabernacle one finds a structural arrangement that provides additional indications of how the biblical author intended the sanctuary to be perceived. As Childs aptly demonstrates, Exodus 32-34—which functions as a literary hinge between the tabernacle building instructions (Exod 25-31) and its execution and inauguration (Exod 35-40)—is the theological framework for the interpretation of the tabernacle account:

The canonical function of Ex. 32-34 is to place the institutions of Israel's worship within the theological framework of sin and forgiveness. Moses had not even descended from the mountain with the blueprint for worship (32.1ff.) before Israel turned to false worship. The covenant relationship stood under the shadow of human disobedience

²¹ Angel Manuel Rodriguez, "Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 24 (1986), 129.

²² Childs, 175.

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from the outset. The golden calf incident in ch. 32 is portrayed, not as an accidental misdeed, but as a representative reaction, constitutive to human resistance to divine imperatives. The worship inaugurated at Sinai did not reflect an ideal period of obedience on Israel's part, but the response of a people who were portrayed from the outset as the forgiven and the restored community. If ever there were a danger of misunderstanding Sinai as a pact between partners, the positioning of Ex. 32-34 made clear that the foundation of covenant was, above all, divine mercy and forgiveness.²³

Such a covenantal framework is also reflected in the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple (1 Kgs 8:14-61). Solomon petitions that forgiveness be granted to sinners as they pray towards the temple. So it becomes clear that the temple, like the tabernacle, functions within a covenantal framework of forgiveness, which would result in the restoration of the broken relationship between the Lord and his people. In other words, in the temple God works to forgive sins and restore relationships.

It should be noted that the correlation between sanctuary and redemption is reinforced by other strands of biblical literature. Psalm 51, for example, focuses on sin and forgiveness using language evocative of the sanctuary and its rituals. David's contrition and repentance from his sin is framed by a cluster of terms at home in the sanctuary semantic field with its covenantal and redemption framework. After appealing to God's lovingkindness and mercy (*hesed* and *rāḥāmīm*), the contrite king acknowledges his rebellion (*peša'*) and implores God to purify (*tiḥar*) him from his sin (*ḥaṭṭāt*). He acknowledges the limitation of sacrifices to deal with the horrendous consequences of sin:²⁴ "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise." (v. 16). But in saying this, David, was not denying the important role of the sanctuary service, but simply warning against a mechanical or manipulatory use of the ritual system. As the last verse makes clear, God is "pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering" (v. 19). It becomes evident that

²³ Childs, 175-176.

²⁴ In connection with David's sin (2 Sam 11), we should note that there were no provisions in the sacrificial system to deal with adultery and homicide. In these cases, the law demanded the execution of the offender (See, e.g., Lev 20:10; 24:21).

“sacrifices of righteousness” (*zibhēy šedeq*) are acceptable to God, that is, sacrifices that are offered according to God’s instructions and accompanied with confession and contrition. So for the purpose of this study, it must be emphasized that this psalm conceives of the sanctuary service within the framework of redemption and forgiveness.

Another passage worth mentioning is Isaiah 56:1-7, where temple, covenant, and Sabbath are presented as interlocked concepts. Although the temple is portrayed from a universal perspective, its soteriological function is made evident: “Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations” (Isa 56:7).

A similar perception obtains for the New Testament. In Hebrews, the earthly sanctuary is conceived in connection with the covenant (Heb 9:1) and as a place where, albeit in a limited and restricted way, redemption from sin was enacted and whose ultimate consummation lies in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 8:1-2). In the same vein, the book of Revelation portrays the imagery of the sanctuary in close connection with the redemption of sin and restoration.²⁵ So it seems that from a Biblical theology perspective a crucial function of the sanctuary is to serve as the place where God dwells among his people and establishes with them a close relationship—a relationship that is preserved because of God’s disposition to forgive sins and restore his people to full communion with himself.

Sanctuary and Creation

The Biblical texts display indubitable allusions and imagery linking sanctuary with creation. Whether such details should be taken as an endorsement for a cosmological view or should be interpreted otherwise is discussed in this section. It seems clear that the construction of the tabernacle is narrated with language redolent of creation, as scholars

²⁵ Among several studies, see Richard M. Davidson, “Sanctuary Typology” in *Symposium on Revelation—Book I*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 6 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 99-130; Jon Paulien, “The Role of the Hebrew Cultus, Sanctuary, and Temple in the Plot and Structure of the Book of Revelation,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 33 (1995): 245-264.

have observed.²⁶ The instructions for building and selecting materials for the tabernacle as reported in Exodus 25-31 are divided into seven sections (25:1; 30:11, 17, 22, 34; 31:1, 12). Each of the first six sections begins with the expression “and the Lord spoke to Moses saying” and the seventh section concludes with a reference to the seventh-day Sabbath (31:12-17). Following the golden calf episode, the last major section of Exodus (35-40) begins with another reference to the Sabbath (35:1-7), which may be understood as an allusion to creation,²⁷ and concludes with a sevenfold structure linking sanctuary with creation (40:17-34). Within this last pericope, six subsections end with the expression “as the Lord had commanded Moses” (40:21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32). And, interestingly enough, the seventh subsection (40:33) uses language reminiscent of the closing of the general creation account of Genesis on the seventh day. “So Moses finished (*wayēkal*) the work (*hammēlākāh*),” which echoes Genesis 2:2: “And on the seventh day God finished (*wayēkal*) His work (*mēlakētō*) which He had done (*‘āsāh*)” (Gen 2:2). We should note, however, that an even stronger connection appears in 1 Kings 7:40 in the temple narrative: “So Hiram finished (*wayēkal*) doing (*la‘āsōt*) all the work (*hammēlākāh*) that he was to do (*‘āsāh*) for King Solomon for the house of the Lord.”

In addition, a further link between sanctuary and creation may be inferred from sanctuary imagery reflected in the Garden of Eden narrative. According to *Jubilees* 8:19, Eden can be conceived in sanctuary terms: “And he [Noah] knew that the Garden of Eden is the holy of holies.” Modern scholars have come to a similar opinion by identifying conceptual and verbal correlations between the sanctuary and the Garden of Eden. Attention has been given to the location of the

²⁶ See Menahem Haran, “The Priestly Image of the Tabernacle,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 36 (1965): 191-226; Peter J. Kearney, “Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Ex 25-40,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 89, no. 3 (1977): 375-387; Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, “Genesis 1 and the Building of the Israelite sanctuary,” *Ministry*, Feb., 2002; available at: <http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2002/February/genesis-1-and-the-building-of-the-israelite-sanctuary.html>.

²⁷ For a detailed study of the Sabbath texts framing the golden calf episode, see Daniel C. Timmer, *Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath: The Sabbath Frame of Exodus 31:12-17; 35:1-3 in Exegetical and Theological Perspective*, *Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments* 27, ed. Dietrich-Alex Koch, Matthias Köckert, Christopher Tuckett and Stephen McKenna (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 28-102.

garden (facing East), the precious stones (bdellium and onyx) and gold, the presence of God in the garden, the cherubim guarding its entrance, the inference that sacrifices were offered at its door, etc., as support for the perception of Eden as a sanctuary.²⁸

At this juncture one has to draw the implications of these literary and verbal connections between sanctuary and creation. Are such intertextual relationships an indication that the sanctuary should be interpreted as a type of the cosmos/world/creation? Or is there another explanation capable of doing justice to the biblical data? As noted above, since the Bible portrays the sanctuary and its services as the means by which the Lord would deal with the sins of his people and restore the covenantal relationship, the answer to the first question is a negative one. However, the clear links between sanctuary and creation must be accounted for. So in the rest of this section I will suggest an alternative explanation which appears consistent with the biblical data.

We should note at first that some of the links between the Creation account and the construction of the Tabernacle might be explained on the basis that both works share some obvious commonalities. Both are material constructions, both are based on the authority of God, and both are artistic works in their own right. So it should not be surprising that words and expressions used to narrate the creation of the world are also employed to describe the construction of the tabernacle. By way of illustration, a narrative about the construction of a house and the construction of a boat may share some similarities, without necessarily implying that the house is a type of the boat or vice versa. Similarities in this case could be easily explained on the basis of shared elements

²⁸ See, e.g. Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story" in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Union of World Studies, 1986), 19-25; Donald W. Parry, "Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary," in *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret, 1994), 126-151; Lawrence Stager, "Jerusalem and the Garden of Eden" in *Eretz Israel* 26 (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1998), 183-94; Joaquim Azevedo, "At the Door of Paradise: A Contextual Interpretation of Gen 4:7," *Biblische Notizen* 100 (1999): 45-59; Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, "Eden and the Israelite sanctuary," *Ministry*, April 2004, available at: <http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2002/April/eden-and-the-israelite-sanctuary>; Sergio Silva, "Creation and Sanctuary" in *The Book and Student: Theological Education as Mission*, ed. Wagner Kuhn (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 2012), 147-166.

required for both constructions. So some similarities between sanctuary and creation accounts do not necessarily require a cosmological view of the sanctuary in the sense of the latter being a microcosm or type of the universe/world.²⁹

Second, some intertextual links, as those mentioned above, may have been intentionally used by the biblical writer to connect the sanctuary with creation on a theological basis. It will be argued below that creation is the theological foundation for the entire tabernacle system. The God who dwells inside the sanctuary is the creator God. This seems to be the main connection and all other assumed links should be interpreted in light of this major concept. Furthermore, the earthly sanctuary came to be established as an expression of God's covenant with his people. In the covenant God starts to reverse the evil effects of sin and align creation with his loving purposes.

That creation is the underlying principle and motivation behind the sanctuary and its attending rituals and laws seems to be borne out by the following considerations. A major principle operating in the sanctuary system is the principle of life. The God who dwells in the sanctuary is the God of life and has nothing to do with death. Contrary to the Canaanites and Egyptians who worshiped ancestors and deified dead kings, the religion revealed in the tabernacle, as a matter of principle, excluded death from the realm of true worship. This may explain the prohibition of certain pagan mourning customs (Deut 14:1-2) and the laws regarding corpse contamination (Num 5:1-4), which included specific instructions for priests (Lev 21:1, 11) and Nazirites (Num 6:6). Neglect to comply with the ritual prescribed to eliminate such impurity would exclude the willful offender from the congregation (Num 19:13).³⁰

²⁹ See Robert Gordon, "The Week That Made the World: Reflections on the First Pages of the Bible," in *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham*, ed. J. G. McConville and Karl Moeller (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 228-241.

³⁰ A person who wantonly neglected the application of the ashes of the red cow to eliminate corpse contamination (Num 19) would be "cut off" (*karet*) from the congregation. According to Donald Wold such punishment meant exclusion from the afterlife ("The *Karet* Penalty in P: Rationality and Cases," *The Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 1 (1979): 1-25). For a detailed explanation of the ritual involving the ashes of the red cow, see Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 658-662.

It seems that Hyan Maccoby is on the right track in observing that “everything that is a feature of the cycle of birth and death must be banished from the Temple of the God who does not die and was not born. Not that there is anything sinful about birth and death,” but as Maccoby further asserts, “the one place in the world which has been allotted for the resting of the Divine Presence must be protected from mortality.”³¹ This is an insightful perception that may help in our understanding of Creation imagery in the sanctuary. As the place where forgiveness from sin was granted, the sanctuary functioned as the dwelling of the God who hates death, which is the ultimate consequence of sin. In the sanctuary God undertakes a work of restoring Creation by dealing with sin. Therefore, Creation and cosmic motifs related to sanctuary may not intend to represent the earth as an antitypical sanctuary, but to express the fact that creation stands as the foundation upon which the entire service of the sanctuary is based.

In the New Testament both Paul and John develop their portrayal of salvation in connection with Creation. Paul’s development of Adam-typology clearly demonstrates that the work of redemption is somehow consistent with God’s work of creation, as Christ the second Adam came to revert the failure of the first Adam (Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:21-22). For Paul, the logic of salvation seems to operate on the presupposition of Creation. In Revelation, interconnections between salvation and creation occur within the framework of sanctuary imagery. As the concluding chapters of Revelation clearly show, the ultimate outcome of salvation is the full restoration of creation when “the tabernacle of God is with men” (Rev 21:3).

Again, the occurrence of verbal, conceptual, and iconic connections between the earthly sanctuary and creation does not appear to portray the latter as the antitype of the former. Rather on the basis of the broad context of the Scriptures, creation as it appears in relation with the sanctuary functions as the operational system according to which the entire ritual system and the theology derived from it can make sense. And this happens when creation is integrated with salvation/redemption.

³¹ Hyam Maccoby, *Ritual and Morality: The Ritual Purity System and Its Place in Judaism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 207.

Sanctuary and Vertical Typology

In the instructions given to Moses on how to build the sanctuary, God made clear that everything should be made according to the “model” (*tabnît*). The meaning and implications of the term “model” (*tabnît*) have received detailed treatment in other studies.³² For the purpose of this article, it shall suffice to note that among the various connotations of the Hebrew term *tabnît*, that of pointing to the original temple in heaven seems to carry considerable weight for several reasons. First, it is used with this connotation in the crucial texts of Exodus 25:40: “And see to it that you make them according to the pattern (*tabnît*) which was shown you on the mountain” (cf. vs. 9).³³ Second, the Bible clearly attests the existence of a heavenly sanctuary working in dynamic interaction with the earthly counterpart (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:30-35, 41-50; 2 Chr 30:27; Isa 6:1-7).³⁴ Third, such a vertical correspondence between earthly tabernacle and heavenly sanctuary is attested in the epistle to the Hebrews (8:1-5; 9:23-26).³⁵ Lastly, one should keep in mind that the ancient Near Eastern mind would naturally associate the earthly tabernacle with its heavenly archetype, as several scholars have noted.³⁶

³² Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, 367-388.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ See Elias Brasil de Souza, *The Heavenly Sanctuary/Temple Motif in the Hebrew Bible: Its Function and Relationship to the Earthly Counterparts*, Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series 7 (Berrien Springs, MI: 2005).

³⁵ The nature of the heavenly sanctuary in the Epistle to the Hebrews is a debated issue among scholars. For the purpose of this study, we should note that even some non-Adventist scholars concede that Hebrews may conceive of a typological correspondence between the earthly sanctuary and its heavenly counterpart. The following excerpt from the commentary on Hebrews 9:23 by William Lane is instructive: “The additional statement that the heavenly prototypes of the earthly tabernacle and its cultus required cleansing ‘by better sacrifices than these’ clearly implies that the heavenly sanctuary had also become defiled by the sin of the people. Although this implication has been dismissed as ‘nonsense’ . . . , it is consistent with the conceptual framework presupposed by the writer in 9:1-28. His thinking has been informed by the Levitical conception of the necessity for expiatory purification” (*Hebrews 9-13*, Word Biblical Commentary 47B [Dallas: Word, 1998], 247).

³⁶ See Bernhard W. Anderson and Steven Bishop, *Contours of Old Testament Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), 201; Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 546; Caroline Waerzeggers, “The Pious King: Royal Patronage of Temples,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*, ed. by Karen Radner and Eleanor Robson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 730.

For this reason one should not overlook the correspondence between the earthly sanctuary and its heavenly counterpart. Correlations and analogies between the sanctuary with the world, creation, cosmos, etc. should not obliterate Scripture's foundational perception that the heavenly sanctuary is the ultimate locus of God's activity in favor of the human race and the place where Christ performs his priestly ministry. From a prophetic/eschatological perspective, the antitypical/archetypal temple to which the earthly tabernacle pointed is not the earth/world nor the cosmos as a whole—or heavens, for that matter—but the heavenly sanctuary of God located in heaven.

As the parallelism between Daniel 7 and 8 makes clear, the purification of the Sanctuary announced in Dan 8:14 corresponds to the heavenly Judgment portrayed in Dan 7:9-14.³⁷ So the sanctuary to be purified in Daniel 8:14 must be located in heaven. Again, according to this parallelism, it should be noted that since it has been recognized that Daniel 7:9-14 portrays day of atonement imagery, most certainly the event described as the purification of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 must indicate that Day of Atonement activities are performed in the heavenly temple. Studies of the cultic terminology of Daniel 8:9-14 have revealed that the language of this chapter not only refer to general sanctuary concepts but conjures up day-of-atonement imagery.³⁸

A few examples should suffice to make this point. In an interesting study Fletcher-Louis has suggested that the scene of the Son of Man coming to the Ancient of Days with the clouds of heaven (Daniel 7:13) evokes the day of atonement when the High Priest entered the most holy place surrounded by a cloud of incense (Lev 16).³⁹ In Daniel 8:14 the term employed in reference to the sanctuary is *qodeš*, the exact word used to designate the most holy place in the rituals of the Day of

³⁷ William H. Shea, "Unity of Daniel" in *Symposium on Daniel*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 2 (Washington, DC: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 209.

³⁸ Ángel M. Rodríguez, "Significance of the Cultic Language in Daniel 8:9-14" in *Symposium on Daniel*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 2 (Washington, DC: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 527-549.

³⁹ Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "The High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible: Dan 7:13 as a Test Case," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 36 (1997): 161-93.

Atonement (Lev 16:2, 3, 16, 17, 20, 23, 27, 33).⁴⁰ Thus as the canonical placement of Daniel 7 and 8 are taken as mutually illuminating texts, a broad picture of the heavenly realities emerges. In this case, it seems clear that the sanctuary in these chapters is not an amorphous or ethereal cosmic temple—or world temple for that matter—but a sanctuary in heaven with structural and functional links with the sanctuary/temple described elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

Conclusions and Implications

On the basis of the above considerations, the following conclusions and implications may be offered. It has been noted that a most important function of the sanctuary in the Bible is to serve as the locus of atonement whereby reconciliation between a holy God and a sinful people is achieved. And it has been argued that this important aspect of the Bible perception of the temple risks being obliterated by cosmological interpretations, which, as noted above, are more reflective of ideas imported from the other ancient Near Eastern cultures than the worldview of the Biblical writers themselves. Furthermore, it was noted that the sanctuary as portrayed in the Hebrew Bible exists in structural and functional relationship to its heavenly antitype, where God deals with the sin problem and implements the plan of salvation. This is a crucial and singular aspect of the Biblical perception of the sanctuary and should not be reduced to the common denominator of the ancient Near Eastern religions.

In the narrative of the tabernacle—and the temple—construction echoes of and verbal parallels to creation motifs are evident. Similar perceptions seem to obtain for the Garden of Eden and its connection with the Sanctuary. However, such links do not necessarily require the world or the garden to be the antitypical sanctuary. Rather, as suggested above, the pervasive occurrences of creation concepts and terminology associated to sanctuary function to stress the idea that creation operates as the foundational and overarching concept from which the theology of redemption articulated in the sanctuary finds its ultimate justification. In redeeming his people from the pernicious effects and consequences of sin, God intends to put creation back on its course. And besides, the God

⁴⁰ Rodriguez, “Significance of the Cultic Language in Daniel 8:9-14,” 531.

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who forgives and restores through the sanctuary ministry is the God who created the heavens and the earth.

In summary, certainly the sanctuary as portrayed in the Scriptures has cosmic implications and the work performed therein affects the entire cosmos in the context of the controversy between good and evil. However, it should be stressed once more, such cosmic overtones should not be allowed to obliterate the redemptive framework of the sanctuary/temple and the typological relationship that obtains between the earthly sanctuary/temple and its heavenly counterpart.

Elias Brasil de Souza, an Associate Director of the Biblical Research Institute, is a native of Brazil and holds a Ph.D. in Old Testament from Andrews University. He has worked as a church pastor in Brazil (1990-1994), Professor of Biblical Studies and Dean of the Theological Seminary at Northeast Brazil College (1995-1999, 2005-2011) in Cachoeira (Bahia), Brazil.
SouzaE@gc.adventist.org